

PONTIAC
ILLINOIS
1895

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IN PHOTO-GRAVURE.

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S. W. TATE, PHOTOGRAPHER,
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On the first day of July, 1837, the town of Pontiac was surveyed and platted by Isaac Whieher, the first surveyor of Livingston county, for the proprietors of the land. These were Henry Weed, Lucius W. Young and Seth M. Young. It was surveyed from the southeast quarter of section 22 and part of the northeast quarter of the same section.

This was done in accordance with an agreement with the county commissioners that if the proprietors of the land would donate the public square, the jail lot, construct a bridge across the Vermillion river, and put up a bond of \$3000 as security for the erection of a court house, the county seat would be located at this point.

This was the starting point, and then and there the beautiful city of Pontiac was born.

The court house which the Weeds and Youngs were to build for the county, was erected in due time, being completed in the year 1841 and occupied by the court for the first time July 23rd, 1842.

Tho' the building was but a modest affair, being simply a frame structure, 22 feet wide and 30 feet long and a story and a half in height, and tho' much inferior to the \$3,000 court house that had been promised, it gave good satisfaction. It had a court room which was 22 by 20 feet, and a small jury room 10 feet square.

It was the custom at that period for the lawyers to follow the judge in his circuit from county to county, and in this modest court house the great Lincoln, Stephen A. Douglas and David Davis had many a legal combat in their youthful days, the memory of which long lingered in the minds of the first settlers of the town.

This historical old building is now the property of the Streamer heirs, and still stands on Madison street, a few blocks east of the square.

The growth of the town and the development of the surrounding country was slow at first, for the reason that emigrants supposed that because the land was comparatively level, that the soil was not the best, and so passed us by to settle in a more rolling country.

But time developed the fact that the level land was the best and that the soil in the townships surrounding Pontiac was practically inexhaustible, and it soon became known that Livingston county was the garden county of the state.

Then the tide of emigration turned and the town and county have ever since experienced a steady, healthy growth, and land which at one time could be bought for five dollars an acre, now commands a hundred.

The city of Pontiac is now widely known as one of the most prosperous and beautiful in the great state of Illinois. It has three railroads, two coal mines in active operation and a good supply of water, and as a manufacturing point it presents unrivaled attractions for the investment of capital.

The citizens pride themselves greatly on the educational advantages possessed by the city. In addition to three commodious public school buildings, the township high school is located here with a corps of teachers that would do honor to any western college.

Those who desire to locate in a city where they can attend the church of their choice would be hard to please if they cannot be accommodated in Pontiac. The Catholics have a fine church edifice and a large and wealthy following. The Methodist church building is one of the best in Central Illinois, and the membership is large and enthusiastic. The Presbyterian church edifice is an honor to the city, and is well filled by their membership and congregation, while the Baptist have lately come to the front and erected an elegant structure that is an architectural gem to accommodate their growing membership. The Episcopalians have a small but beautiful stone edifice and a refined, educated membership. The Scandinavian Lutherans have a commodious building and large congregation. The Christians or Disciples of Christ, have a good house and a respectable following. The New Church people have a small organized society which for intelligence and zeal is second to none, while the Colored Methodist and Colored Baptist both own houses of worship.

The Illinois State Reformatory (the pet institution of the state) is located at this point. This institution ranks second in size in the Union. It annually spends over one hundred thousand dollars in building and other improvements.

The business of the Pontiac Shoe Factory has increased to such an extent that the company owning the same is now erecting another large factory which will give employment to several hundred additional hands.

There is no city in the state that can offer better inducements to capitalists, or to those seeking educational advantages, or pleasant homes, than the city of Pontiac.

Pontiac, Ill., August, 1895.

O. F. PEARRE.



TOWNSHIP HIGH SCHOOL



BELOW THE DAM.



LIVINGSTON COUNTY COURT HOUSE.



VIEW ON MADISON STREET.



IN CITY PARK.



FIRST M. E. CHURCH.



GROUP OF RESIDENCES



GROUP OF RESIDENCES



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH



SOUTH WEST FROM COURT HOUSE TOWER



PHOENIX HOTEL



PUBLIC LIBRARY



SCENE ON WASHINGTON STREET



PONTIAC SHOE FACTORY



ELECTRIC LIGHT PLANT



STATE REFORMATORY



SOME PONTAC RESIDENCES



ST. MARY'S CATHOLIC CHURCH



PONTIAC PUBLIC SCHOOL.



VIEW ON GROVE STREET



FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH



AT THE FAIR GROUNDS



WASHINGTON STREET



1174 1904-1905

1175

RESIDENCES



GRACE EPISCOPAL CHURCH



WATER WORKS



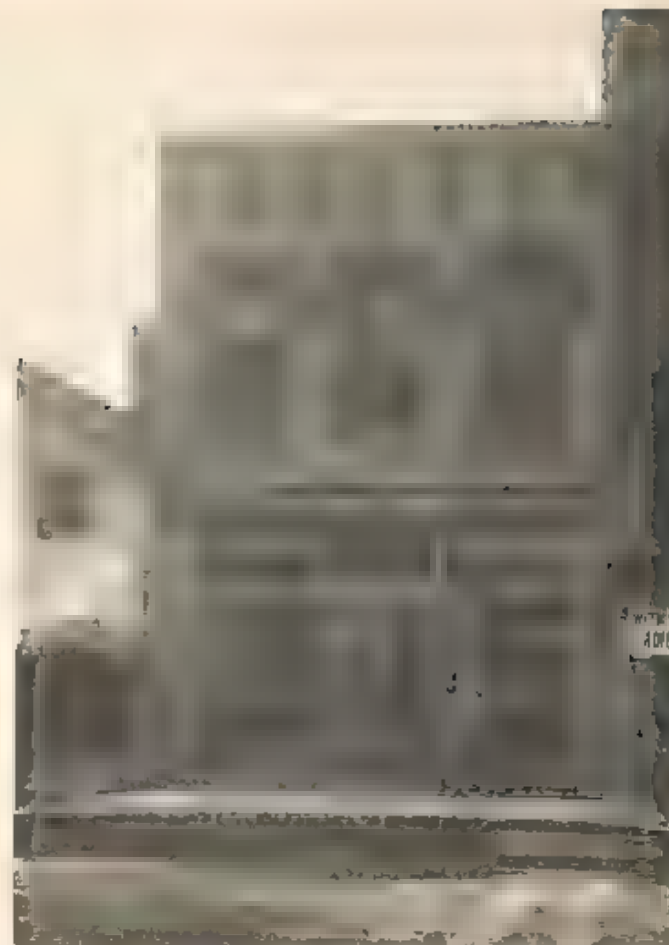
STATE REFORMATORY, (CELL BLOCK.)



ON THE RIVER AT C & A. R. R. BRIDGE



NATIONAL BANK OF PONTAC



LIVINGSTON COUNTY NATIONAL BANK



PONT-AC CEREAL MILLS



GENE EBY



COAL SHAFTS.



AT HOJDER'S FORD





MILL STREET



UP THE VERMILLION, FROM WAGON BRIDGE.



E. P. H. dy.



E. H. Johnson



Gen. Spira



L. W. Hunt



Wm. Ward



E. A. Robinson



J. E. Benson

RESIDENCES.



FROM TOWER OF TOWNSHIP HIGH SCHOOL



FOLKS' OPERA HOUSE. (STAGE.)



WABASH R. R. BRIDGE.